

Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse

1. PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

SOCODEVI's mission is to help improve the living conditions of underprivileged families in developing countries by supporting the creation and strengthening of autonomous, profitable, sustainable, and inclusive cooperatives and associative enterprises by collaborating with its cooperative and mutualist network.

SOCODEVI undertakes to respect its duty to protect the populations with which it is involved and to work to guarantee a healthy, respectful and safe working and collaborative environment for all, both for the populations supported through its projects and initiatives as well as for its teams, at the head office and in the countries where it operates.

This code of conduct therefore aims to elaborate the guiding principles governing the prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse.

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This code of conduct applies to members of the board of directors and management, managers, international and national staff, expert-volunteers, interns and consultants (for the purposes hereof referred to as "staff") and partner organizations. All are required, in all circumstances and without exception, to comply with this Code and the standards of conduct described therein, both as part of and beyond the performance of their duties. Each and every one is therefore responsible for knowing about, understanding, and acting in accordance with the code of conduct.

This code of conduct aims to prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse that could be committed against any person involved in SOCODEVI's activities and to prevent any form of harassment or abuse of power within the organization. This includes during external activities, both related and unrelated to SOCODEVI, in which staff may engage.

3.

SOCODEVI'S COMMITMENTS

SOCODEVI has zero tolerance for any form of sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse within its organization, or in the context of the projects and programs that it implements. In this regard, SOCODEVI is committed to raising awareness of this reality amongst all people who take part in its projects or activities, as well as partner organizations.

In addition, SOCODEVI is committed to:

- Establishing a culture of zero tolerance towards all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, and this as part of all of its activities;
- Take the appropriate corrective measures to protect people's integrity, to prevent the occurrence of such undesirable situations and to put an end to them in any proven case;
- Clearly state the expected standards of conduct to all and ensure that they are understood and respected;
- Raise awareness and train staff and managers in the prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse;
- Improve our collective capacity to recognize and eliminate power imbalances and gender inequalities that may induce sexual misconduct, including situations where there is a combination of cross discrimination (intersectionality);
- Build knowledge and capacity related to survivor/victim-centred approaches;
- Seek to create workplaces where staff and other people from our network of partner organizations (including SOCODEVI member institutions), within our organization and in the countries where we work, do not suffer from or commit sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse;
- Make the mechanisms to report inappropriate behaviour available to everyone in complete security and confidentiality;
- Respond promptly and appropriately to any allegation and take appropriate action in the circumstances against those held responsible for proven inappropriate behaviour;
- Provide psychological and any other appropriate support to victims/survivors, while respecting confidentiality and security.

4.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Members of the Board of Directors & Management

- Affirm their intolerance of all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and sign the declaration of adherence to the Code;
- Participate in and support the culture of zero tolerance towards all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and adopt best practices accordingly;
- Ensure the dissemination of the Code to all stakeholders in the organization;
- Support managers in preventative actions and the handling of reports;
- Monitor the application of the Code;
- Ensure that the necessary human and financial resources are available for the organization to meet its commitments.

4.2 Human Resources Department

- Strengthen SOCODEVI practices in order to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure the continuous training of stakeholders;
- Take the necessary steps to inform, sensitize and empower staff on issues of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse;
- Support and advise managers and field departments in their interventions, in corrective measures to be taken and in disciplinary matters;
- Ensure that any report is the subject of an appropriate intervention and determine the nature of the intervention to be carried out (mediation or investigation) following a report;
- Manage assistance programs and ensure that victims receive the necessary support and assistance (consulting specialist for support, as needed).

4.3 Managers

- Affirm their intolerance to all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and sign the declaration of adherence to the Code;
- Participate in and support the culture of zero tolerance towards all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and adopt best practices accordingly;
- Live and share with their teams the values of respect for the individual and the responsibility of each person to maintain a healthy, safe and respectful work climate.
- Inform, sensitize and empower SOCODEVI's partner organizations on the culture of zero tolerance with regard to all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse;
- Demonstrate vigilance and encourage listening in order to identify and act on risk factors;
- Respond promptly to any situation of which they are aware and report it immediately to the Human Resources Department;
- Preserve the confidentiality of all facts and all information brought to their attention;
- Collaborate in the investigation regarding allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse;
- Identify, in collaboration with the Human Resources Department, the corrective and/or disciplinary measures to be taken.
- Participate in activities (training, awareness, communities of practice) put in place to prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

4.4 Staff & Volunteers (including those from volunteer member institutions, interns and service providers)

- Sign the declaration of adherence to the Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse and behave in a respectful and civil manner at all times;
- Respect the Code and know what is expected of each person;
- Report any incident and, if necessary, assist in the investigation of allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse;
- Participate in activities (training, awareness, communities of practice) put in place to prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

4.5 The country representative designated as responsible for monitoring the application of the code of conduct

- Help inform local staff (including interns and service providers), volunteers and partners about the Code;
- Receive reports/accusations along with the obligation to make a report to the Human Resources Department.
- If necessary, and in consultation with the Human Resources department, designate a person to act locally as mediator or investigator;
- Coordinate the implementation of activities (training, awareness, communities of practice) to prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

4.6 Partner Organizations

- Adhere to the values and culture of zero tolerance for all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse;
- Receive and sign a copy of the declaration of adherence in which it is stated that they understand the content of the Code and understand what is expected of the organization;
- Contribute to the prevention of harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse in collaboration and consultation with SOCODEVI;
- Report any incident to SOCODEVI and, if applicable, collaborate in the investigation following allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Participate in activities (training, awareness, communities of practice) put in place to prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

5.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- 5.1 Senior management, managers, staff, expert-volunteers, interns, consultants, and SOCODEVI partner organizations have a duty to behave so that everyone can benefit from a positive, safe, respectful and professional work environment.
- 5.2 Everyone has a responsibility to help create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.
- 5.3 The following behaviours, without constituting an exhaustive list, will not be tolerated under any circumstances nor at any time:
 - a) Demonstrating aggression or use of violence (verbal, physical or sexual);
 - b) Having an intimate relationship with a person in a vulnerable situation. In particular, a situation of vulnerability may be present in, without being limited to, a context where there is a relationship between a representative of

SOCODEVI, Canadian or international, and a national person employed within the framework of a project.

- c) Having a sexual relationship or contact with a minor¹, regardless of local laws regarding the age of majority or consent. Lack of knowledge of the actual age of the minor cannot be invoked as a defence.
- d) Exchanging money, a job, goods or services for sex or sexual favours. This standard applies both during working hours and while off duty
- f) All other forms of humiliating or degrading behaviour are prohibited.

6.

REPORTING MECHANISMS

SOCODEVI provides staff, beneficiaries and any person associated with a project or program with reporting or complaint mechanisms, to enable them to inform the organization of any inappropriate behaviour or to denounce any situation of harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse.

A written report/accusation can be filed directly with the Human Resources Department at rh@socodevi.org, including details of the allegations, the name of the alleged victim(s), the name of the alleged perpetrator, a description of the incident(s) as well as the date(s) on which it occurred and, if applicable, the names of any witnesses.

A report/accusation can be made to a manager who will collect the information mentioned in the previous paragraph and send it to the Human Resources Department at rh@socodevi.org.

There is a reporting mechanism for beneficiary communities: two key people per project will be designated (one from the community and the other from project staff) to monitor and report potential cases of harassment, exploitation and sexual abuse.

Community members can also, at their discretion, report these cases directly to SOCODEVI staff members and to country/field offices.

¹ See definitions in annexes.

7.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Any report/accusation will be treated with diligence and with complete discretion.
2. Information related to the handling of a complaint will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of determining the corrective measures to be taken, if necessary.
3. Persons who avail themselves, in good faith, of the mechanisms made available will not be subject to any rebuke in the event that the report is found to be unfounded.
4. Conversely, a complaint deemed unfounded and/or lodged in bad faith is susceptible to be considered a serious matter of misconduct that may lead to disciplinary measures.
5. Healthy and respectful social interactions, as well as humour offered without intent to cause discomfort on either side, and deemed appropriate by SOCODEVI, does not constitute harassment.
6. Psychological harassment should not be confused with a conflicting personalities, or with the normal exercise of management rights by managers, in particular the work organization, task distribution, performance evaluation, and the application of disciplinary measures. As long as managers do not act in an abusive or discriminatory manner, their actions do not constitute harassment.
7. Culturally different interpretations should not stand in the way of the proper handling of a report based on a person-centric approach.
8. The organization will take all necessary measures to protect and support victims/survivors and informants.
9. The organization will maintain high standards regarding background and reference checks of staff and volunteers.

8.

ENFORCEMENT

The organization takes a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. A zero-tolerance approach means that allegations are investigated as thoroughly as possible and that alleged perpetrators must answer for their actions, including prosecution and/or dismissal or termination of the business relationship with SOCODEVI.

Any formal complaint of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse will be investigated when sufficient information is available. The investigation will be conducted respecting the principles of confidentiality, fairness and neutrality. When these principles cannot be guaranteed by someone within our organization, we will refer the investigation to an external party. Disciplinary sanctions up to and including exclusion from the organization or program, or dismissal from employment or termination of contract, will be applied.

9.

SUPPORT MEASURES

Specific measures will be taken to support any victim/survivor depending on the circumstances. SOCODEVI will offer to its staff, as well as volunteers or interns, help and support programs so that they are accompanied by professionals, as needed.

10.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

A record of reported cases will be maintained by the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department will report to the Board's HR Committee at all constituted meetings, which in turn will report to the Board at least once a year, or more if necessary. On these occasions the General Manager will inform the Board of Directors of updates and make recommendations if necessary.

This Code meets contractual requirements issued by Global Affairs Canada and respects the Leaders' Commitment of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) to Prevent and Combat Sexual Misconduct. [Commitment of CCCI Leaders](#)

Annexe 1

Definitions²

Sexual Abuse:

any actual or threatened sexual abuse, committed with force, coercion or through an unequal relationship. Any sexual activity with children/persons under the age of 18 is prohibited, regardless of the age of majority or consent in the location and is considered sexual abuse. Not knowing or being mistaken about a child's age is not a defense in this matter.

Sexual Exploitation:

abusing or attempting to abuse someone in a state of vulnerability, in an unequal power relationship or in a relationship of trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not exclusively, for the purpose of obtaining a pecuniary, social or political benefit.

Sexual Harassment:

vexatious conduct of a sexual nature. This can be manifested by, for example, advances, invitations, inappropriate requests or solicitations for favours; remarks, insults, improper jokes, inappropriate comments about a person's body or appearance; unnecessary physical contact, indecent staring or other inappropriate gestures; threats, reprisals, implicit or explicit (refusal of promotion, imposition of disciplinary measures, dismissal) or other injustices associated with sexual favours that are requested but not granted; promises of benefits or rewards in exchange for favours of a sexual nature.

PASEA (Protection Against Sexual Exploitation & Abuse):

the term used by the United Nations and the community of non-governmental organizations (NGO) to refer to the measures taken to protect vulnerable people from sexual exploitation and abuse by their own employees or associated personnel.

² Sources : Loi sur les normes du travail du Québec et accords de contribution avec le gouvernement du Canada.

DECLARATION OF ADHERENCE

I, _____,
hereby acknowledge having received a copy of the SOCODEVI Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and having read, understand and agree to comply with.

I understand what is expected of me and that my behaviour must align with SOCODEVI's culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

I understand that violating any provision of the Code may result in disciplinary measures, including my dismissal from or the termination of my contractual relationship with SOCODEVI. Lastly, I understand that there could be civil and/or criminal proceedings in the event of a breach of the law.

SIGNATURE:

DATE: